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GOD'S DEALINGS

vs.

OUR SOCIAL CONDITIONS

A Series of Conferences

BY

RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

NEW YORK
JOSEPH F. WAGNER

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God's Dealings vs. Our Social Conditions

I. THE EQUALITY OF GOD'S DEALINGS

I. His Temporal Providence

"God will not except any man's person . . . for he hath made the little and the great, and he had equally care of all."—Wisd. vi, 8.

I. If there is one thing more than another that strikes one on a superficial glance at the world and its providential arrangements, it is the great inequalities of all kinds which mark different classes of men. Some seem to have all the chances, others none; some have every advantage and happiness, without deserving them previously, or justifying them by a fitting use of them: others have all the misfortunes and privations without having earned them. The distance between the extremes is enormous and fulfils terribly these words: 'He that hath, to him shall be given and he shall abound: but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath" (Matt. xiii, 12). The mysteries of God's dealings with men are as impenetrable to us as the mysteries of His divine nature. We cannot judge of them until at the last day He shall reveal to us the details of His providential plans, the secrets of His working in individual souls and human societies, and the particular results in the way of retribution hereafter. Unlike the mysteries of God's nature, the facts of His Providence are before our eyes and seem to challenge speculation and criticism. If they

are regarded irreverently and through any other medium than the divine light, they become an insoluble problem and a temptation. They would seem a satirical refutation of the Christian doctrine as to the equality of all mankind in God's estimation, and in the care He accords to them. They would afford seeming grounds to some for blaming the justice of God, questioning His wisdom and kindly providence over all, mistrusting Him, and rebelling against His dispositions. Especially are the arrangements of Providence a trial to those who suffer tangibly under them. In grave trouble a man thinks that no one's afflictions are equal to his own. He believes them to be less merited and heavier to bear than any others in the whole world. He needs some insight into God's ways, the virtue of resignation, strength of character, and much grace, to be able to endure patiently without blasphemy and without murmuring. Many try to avenge their injustice, as they consider it, by insulting God and religion; they seek comfort in the indulgence of their passions or in insensibility; often in desperation they wrest the mastery over their destinies out of the hands of God; they end at once their trouble and their life, and present themselves rebelliously and unbidden before the dread tribunal of God's judgment.

It is the result of a superficial and unreligious view of the facts that men overestimate the real inequalities among mankind. When we take into consideration all that God has made known to us through His revealed word, through the moral and spiritual teaching of His Church, through the lives of His saints, and through history; when we apply what we know about God's Providence, His designs, and His methods, then we shall find much light cast upon the problems of human life; we shall be helped in bearing our own troubles, and we shall see that, underlying the superficial inequalities, there is a vast and deep equality in God's dealings with men.

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So the surface of the ocean for ever varies: here warm, there icy cold; now gleaming like a silver mirror, or as if strewn with diamonds; again black and threatening beneath a gathering storm, and elsewhere gloomy with eternal mists, or studded with dangerous icebergs; it is beautiful as Paradise, or furious and appealing as hell; serving men's purposes, or mercilessly devouring their treasures and their lives. Yet a thousand fathoms below, there is no change of night or day, of heat or cold, of calm or storm; the great currents move on in unchanging uniformity; they go on with their secular geological work, heaping up and leveling, laying down new strata, preparing the surface of future continents. Let us consider now the underlying uniformity of God's dealings in the distribution of worldly advantages and disadvantages.

There are as many different inequalities as there are different kinds of good things. There are inequalities of wealth and poverty, of health and sickness, of education and ignorance. The advantages of wealth, or goods of fortune, include, besides riches and position, also birth, influence, respect, freedom, leisure, the services of others, the possession and use of many things. It is here that the inequalities between classes are most visible and excite most bitter resentment. At one extreme are men who live in extraordinary ease and luxury, able to satisfy every desire and secure every pleasure; at the other extreme are enormous multitudes who must labor hard to gain a mere scanty sufficiency, and who live more or less on the brink of destitution. Leaving out of consideration for the moment these miserable, disinherited thousands who lead lives of virtual slavery in our great cities, who are in a state of chronic starvation, with only one step between them and death, we may venture to say that between rich and poor, notwithstanding the wide gulf of separation, there is less real inequality than many suppose. Error

on this point arises from considering the goods of fortune as an end instead of a means; from considering that they are useful and good in themselves, whereas their real value is that they secure an ulterior object. That object, from the economical point of view, is our satisfaction, enjoyment, happiness in this life: it is, from the supernatural point of view, holy living, the glory of God and the attainment of heaven. The world values the goods of fortune for their economical uses. Yet even in this aspect of the matter, those who possess much and those who possess little are very much on a level as to personal satisfaction and happiness. Each may attain to the same result quite irrespectively of the amount of cash he expends on it. Commodities and privileges may, indeed, be raw material of a certain enjoyment, but it is a most pernicious error to suppose that all enjoyment depends on the power of purchasing these things. Happiness depends much more on a man's own qualities than on the external objects of enjoyment. It depends more on health than on money, more on the virtues of a well-regulated mind than on nerves or digestion. And infidels have recognized as vividly as Christians, that those important qualities of mind are cultivated and developed much more by religion than by material possessions or even by mental culture.

II. (1) Happiness does not increase in proportion with income and rise in life. Double a man's income; he will have double power of purchasing commodities, but not a double power of enjoyment. He may go on increasing his expenditure on enjoyments indefinitely, but he very soon reaches the limits of his power of enjoying. Then follows bitter disappointment as he realizes that he cannot profit by his exceptional opportunities, that his faculty of using cannot keep pace with his power of purchasing, and that he can get no more satisfaction from enormous wealth than others get from one-tenth

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or one-thousandth part of his income. It is with him as with children. A poor child with a rag doll may find in it more enjoyment and may be more happy than a pampered child overwhelmed with an abundance of the most expensive toys. If it be the case that a man contented with a thousand dollars a year gets as much happiness as a man with a million, the lot of these two men is really equal. The fact that one can purchase a thousand times more commodities than the other is a merely accidental difference not affecting the result: in actual enjoyment he can purchase no more than the poor man. Again, if a workingman gets as much pleasure from a game of ball on the village green as the lord of the manor does from going the round of his stables, his gardens and preserves, he has no cause, for that afternoon at least, to complain of the inequality of fortune. Or again, say that you are supplying food to a robust and hungry man and to a delicate invalid. To the invalid you give but a small fraction of what you give to the other; but he has no ground for complaint; you have treated them alike by giving to each enough for his wants; there is equality under a superficial inequality. God's dealings are the same towards all; under a great variety of external circumstances He gives to each the opportunity of leading a good and sufficiently happy life, and of saving his soul. So far as men fail to secure such happiness as God has prepared for them, it is due to their sins or the sins of others, to the neglect of God's natural laws, and not to God.

(2) Granting, however, that some men receive greater actual enjoyment from life than others, still the positive inequality is no ground for envy. The mere fact of not possessing something that another has is not a grievance; it is not a privation of anything due to one. The supply here corresponds to the demand. Men's characters and requirements accommodate themselves to their circum-

stances. Brought up in one condition of life, they would generally be less comfortable in any other. It has been well said that although no one is more pitiable than a king who has lost his throne, no man is to be pitied for not being a king (Pascal). It is no loss to any man that he is without a thing which he has not known; there is no real inequality in one man possessing what another does not know or require.

(3) Those who seem to enjoy life most are certainly those who possess the least: they are free from cares, which are the great obstacle to happiness. Simple races are content with very few of the advantages of life; they are without the wants that harass more cultivated men, and it is no privation to them that they cannot gratify such wants. Who can have a higher enjoyment of mere life, with fewer drawbacks than the savage without city or house, property in land, clothing, books, bank account, education, science or law? It is not a high state nor desirable: but he has no cause to complain of the lot assigned to him. He has freedom, sunshine, air, food, repose; he is light-hearted and mirthful, he is far and away better off in material enjoyment than many millions of civilized men, educated, holding possessions, conscious of great powers, having a position to maintain, and subject to all the pains and anxieties, doubts and diseases of the modern world.

(4) There is another thing to be borne in mind by those who suffer at seeing superior advantages denied to themselves and granted to others, viz., that every advantage has its corresponding drawback, and every privation its corresponding compensation. (a) Riches bring trouble and cares unknown to the poor. The poor man has less anxiety about his uncertain future than the man of wealth has about administering and preserving his property. He who has much to enjoy has much to lose, and needs to guard against many

dangers. Many a rich man has found himself a servant, a slave to his own property, and has got no more from it than a servant's wages, board and lodging. (b) A distinguished position is a pedestal on which a man is exposed to the envy, the criticism, the hatred, the intrigues of ill-disposed men. That mere fact draws attention to his faults and makes excuse unavailing. Many would gladly exchange a position of dignity for the freedom and tranquillity of an obscure life. (c) Success and the gratification of men's desires increase their appetite. The more they have, the more they want. Desires consume their souls. Having attained their goal they find there is something beyond which they must strive for. Never can their souls be filled and satisfied with worldly things. (d) As temporal advantages increase, so do temptations and opportunities of sin, and so the sources of unhappiness. Pride, ambition, jealousy, resentment, the whole cohort of vices find a wide door open to them, they enter in, and all peace vanishes. So in the Book of Esther we read that a man having great riches and a multitude of children, and great glory above all the king's servants and princes, reckoned it all as nothing on account of his hatred to Mardochai the Jew. (e) God's greater gifts bring with them a heavy responsibility. They increase our power of glorifying God and doing good in the world; there is a stringent obligation to use all our talents to good advantage; the indulgence of selfishness or apathy becomes a serious matter in one who has power from God to do some great work, and he prepares for himself a rigorous judgment and a terrible punishment. Dives is in hell, according to the parable, not for any recorded wickedness, but for the mere possession—the unfruitful possession—of his wealth.

(5) These points suggest the compensations which restore the balance of equality in favor of those who seem less blessed by God.

In nature there is compensation for every privation. The blind man often feels that he has gained more than he has lost, through the increased delicacy of his other senses and their susceptibility to pleasure. A party of deaf and dumb persons show much more brightness among themselves and sense of enjoyment than as many ordinary people. Cripples without arms have been trained to use their feet as freely as hands, and to execute intricate works of painting and etching. In the lower orders of creation, the devices are most wonderful and beautiful by which an animal, deprived of ordinary powers of defense or escape, is able to elude its enemies. So the chameleon, weak, unarmed, and slow to move is saved from extermination by its power of changing its color to that of the object on which it rests. These analogies, with the knowledge of God's goodness to His highest creatures, and the equal estimation in which He holds every human soul, should suffice to convince us that a similar Providence watches over us, and makes good to us in other ways any deficiencies that we may suffer. The default of earthly goods is made up to us by other openings for happiness, or at any rate by greater spiritual advantages.

(6) Very much of what has been said hitherto applies as much to intellectual as to material advantages. There are vast differences among men in point of natural endowments and cultivation. The educated man finds new and broader spheres of life open to him; he has powers and enjoyments which the uncultivated cannot conceive. These blessings are far greater than any which wealth alone can give. There is less need to enter on a close consideration of the inequalities hence arising, because they are less visibly marked and excite less discontent and envy. Those who are deficient in these gifts have but little desire for them and even despise them, so little is happiness dependent on them. The essential happiness of men,

their knowledge of God and their salvation does not depend on the varying accidents of life, such as birth, position in the world, nor even on such things as talent and education. The distribution of these things is unequal. But in those things which are of essential importance there is again real equality underneath the surface. Further, there are drawbacks even to great mental endowments. Impaired nerves and health, mental diseases, melancholy, ennui, uncertainty, doubt, increased responsibility before God without increased moral strength to meet it, these tend to make the balance of equality hang more level than might at first sight appear.

III. But now we must pass to those other numerous cases where it cannot be said that the character of enjoyment has merely taken a different form, but where there is no visible compensation; where men lead lives of weary toil, suffering, privation, pain, disease, with no gleam of sunshine on their dark fate. How can these think that God has placed them on equal terms with other men? *First,* it may be answered that the evils of this state of misery are not God's creation or distribution. God has provided materially for the well-being of all His creatures, and His moral and spiritual laws are sufficient to regulate the proper distribution and enjoyment of the provision He has made. Every perturbation of that good order arises from men's own sins, or those of their progenitors, or of their nation. God could not prevent sin without reducing men to the condition of the brutes. To prevent them abusing their liberty would be to destroy liberty, and with it all merit and reward; to stem the evil consequences of sin would be to suspend forever the laws of cause and effect. And, further, those consequences could not be confined to the guilty person unless all human society and mutual dependence were to cease and every man live in absolute solitude.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that there are many lives below the average of happiness, and that there is no visible compensation, and that this is in no sense due to their own sins. In view of these facts it may be answered, *secondly,* that there are religious considerations and compensations which make their suffering a special favor and privilege. (1) It may be that they are chosen to serve God in the capacity of victims for the sins of the world. This is a distinct vocation in the Kingdom of God on earth, a function as necessary as prayer and labor. Nothing can be more glorious than to be selected to join the triumph and army of martyrs—of those who witness by suffering—at the head of whom is the Blessed Mother of Sorrows, after our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It may be a function from which most would shrink, and it is one that can be fulfilled by those whom God calls to it, and it is a duty to accept it with resignation if not with delight. (2) All have sins to expiate by suffering. Their sins have helped to increase the flood of evils in the world and do injury to others; there is no injustice in requiring them to do their share in bearing the consequences of the general sinfulness of the rest of the world. Even though their share of suffering be larger than the average, yet it is less than they have themselves deserved, and it may save them from the severer penalties of the future life. (3) Tribulation of any kind is a mental and a spiritual discipline. It helps the character to gain its complete development much more effectually than serving God in peace and comfort. Even while men complain of the rigors of God's Providence towards many, their general sense justifies His ways. Nothing moves them to respectful awe, to tenderness, to enthusiasm, like the sight of misfortune and sorrow. They recognize that adversity is necessary to bring out the highest human virtues and show forth all the

grandeur that a man has in him. (4) There is always comfort to be found in God. Sufferings cast men upon Him and detach them from the world; and this the more, as their necessities are more extreme. God, then, "will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able," He will lighten the burthen or increase the strength, "and will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it" (I Cor. x, 10). If there is one thing more than another to be learned from the lives of the saints, it is how God helps men to bear their burdens, how their endurance can rise to the height of the most intolerable sufferings, and how he rewards with tranquillity and happiness, even in the midst of their agony, those who suffer with resignation and rely on His support. It is rather the effort to escape from God's will and to kick against the good that makes suffering unendurable and creates real inequality in men's lots, the inequalities which they feel and resent. (5) Above all there is compensation in the next world for afflictions here. "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared to the glory to come" (Rom. viii, 18). God's Providence will be justified, all inequalities will be redressed, and those who enjoy the reward will not regret the price it has cost them.

But, it will be urged, this answer to the great problem appeals only to a section of mankind, to the fervent Christian; to millions of miserable beings it is no explanation and no comfort. That is so. God's revelation alone can cast light on the problems in God's creation. For those who reject Religion there are inexplicable inequalities among men, there is a predominance of suffering over the joys of life, and there is no compensation and no explanation. They have revolted against the burden and the yoke, the submission and the self-humiliation of religion, and at the same time they have necessarily lost the light which explains, and the hope which allevi-

ates, the difficulties of life. Religion is really the only comfort, the only strength which mankind have when sorely tried. Religion alone can reduce the apparent irregularities, reconcile men to them, and keep them from violent and unjust attempts to redress them. Nothing else can take its place. The increase of wealth and the spread of science only intensify evils in the absence of religion. Those who have emancipated human affairs from the control of Christianity and given full independence to every immoral impulse, have introduced inequalities among men which God has not made, which threaten dire calamities on human society, and which can only be remedied by Christian faith and Christian charity as taught by the Catholic Church.

THE EQUALITY OF GOD'S DEALINGS

II. His Spiritual Providence

"Our Father who is in Heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and unjust."—Matt. v, 45.

We have already considered the equal Providence of God in distributing temporal goods to men. In many cases we can trace the equality underlying unequal conditions, and see that what appears to be an unequal distribution of good things amounts only to an inequality in the kind or manner of enjoyment. But the true equality between the varying lots of men is not to be sought in the equal enjoyment they receive on earth but in their equal opportunities of salvation. In cases of extreme unhappiness the proof that the sufferers are not unequally dealt with depends entirely on showing that they receive a spiritual or a future compensation. Yet when we consider what we can see of the distribution of spiritual knowledge and grace, and make our rash estimates as to men's opportunities of salvation, we seem to meet the same inequalities of distribution as prevail in the material sphere. Again we are faced by the words: "He that hath, to him shall be given and he shall abound; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matt. xiii, 12). Some are so surrounded with a superabundance of every kind of grace, that it seems as if they could not help saving their souls; while others are so destitute that their salvation seems beyond all hope. There are vast numbers who have inherited an evil disposition from corrupt ancestors, who are in ignorance of the most necessary elements of faith and morality, whose education has filled their minds with prejudice, whose surroundings are so vicious as to

make it almost impossible to be good even if they knew and wished it. To bid them live up to the Christian law, is it not to ask impossibilities? Can they by any chance save their souls? And if not, then are they not the helpless victims of a terrible inequality of treatment? This may be a serious problem with half-formed Christians. Catholics, as members of a Church commissioned by God to teach all truth, and, therefore, infallible, do not consider it part of their duty to blaspheme the name of God whenever His mysteries transcend their intelligence, or to renounce their religion because its doctrines present some difficulties and require the exercise of faith. We cannot fathom the secret ways of God's Providence, but we know enough to prevent them being a stumbling-block to us. There are certain considerations, which, although not explaining God's ways fully to us, will show us that there may be absolute equality in the result although the present conditions of different men may be unequal; and that, at least, we cannot conclude from what we see, that there is any real inequality in God's spiritual dealings with men.

1. We must remember that the principal factors in the problem are quite concealed from us, and that what is visible to us is very likely to mislead our judgments. The inner state of souls and their relations to God are an unknown land to us. Grace and sin are interior in their operations, and their external indications are very imperfect. A man may have the highest opportunities, he may present a good exterior appearance, and may yet be the enemy of God and in danger of perdition. On the other hand, a man may be quite without opportunities, may be an open sinner, yet we cannot say that he is in imminent danger of losing his soul. The degree of his guilt depends on many things which we can never estimate. We cannot know how far he is excused from deliberate malice by untoward circumstances, by inherited perversity, by ignorance, by weakness; or

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how far his guilt is compensated by some act of past virtue, or some noble trait still dormant in his character. We do not know but what he is on the point of growing into another St. Paul or St. Augustine. Still less do we know how far God takes the contending elements into account, what allowances He makes, or what overwhelming graces He may have in store for such a man. He may be of those whom the Master does not call from the market-place into His vineyard till the eleventh hour, and who will receive the same as those who have toiled through the heat of the day.

Especially we cannot read the secrets of the death-bed. The dying man has already ceased to live to the world, he is insensible to all around, all communication with him is forever at an end; but often the consciousness may be still alive, and the final, decisive struggle be raging within that senseless form. Perhaps even then the tide of life's battle may be turned. He who has been last may then become first, and he who has been first become last. God may unveil Himself to the eyes now closed to earth; He may speak secrets of love which the silenced voice can never reveal to us, but which will move and change the still active soul, and gain it to contrition, and love, and salvation. Until we discover these secrets we can never say that God has given to one man less opportunities of salvation than to another.

2. Even though we could verify the fact that one man has received notably less of external graces and opportunities than others, yet this would not prove that his chances of salvation are in any way inferior. As every state of life has its own enjoyments and advantages, so each degree of spiritual endowment has its own securities as well as its dangers. Both of these must be taken into full account before we conclude that the well-endowed man is in a better position than he who has been less favored. The man of cultivation and

leisure who has found his way to the light through much reading, intricate investigations, and deep anxiety, may be tempted to ask, "If it has required so much to convert me, how is it with those who have not my attainments, who have neither time to study nor books to read, who cannot even follow out a line of thought? How can they arrive at such transcendent truths and at such full certainty?" But, for the very reason that all this is beyond the power of the simpler and busier man, God accords the same privileges to his humbler efforts. He has demanded long and anxious effort from the one as the price of truth, because he could afford to pay that price; but He will not allow His spiritual gifts to be dependent on the mere casual possession of natural advantages. The gift of faith to the learned man has been determined, not really by his intellectual efforts, but by his humility and his pious desires. In those qualities the unlearned man may be his equal; there may be less science in his faith, but it is not on that account less meritorious or less effective.

In like manner devotion, love of God, practical virtues, may be helped greatly by theological knowledge, access to spiritual guides, works in other languages, pilgrimages, and other aids. The majority of devout Christians are cut off from all these; yet they do not necessarily suffer from the want of them. They have Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and He is greater than all His gifts. He speaks more willingly to humble, simple souls; their destitution of external aids make them more reliant on Him, and He chooses them, in preference to others, as the depositaries of His richer graces. Fervor and spiritual insight depend chiefly on internal dispositions and prayer; a greater scientific knowledge tends to dry up the tenderness of devotion; abundant aids may turn out to be a hindrance and may dim the inner vision of God, and those who can discourse most learnedly may be in comparative darkness.

3. The greater favors that some receive are counterbalanced by the greater difficulties in working out their salvation, and their greater responsibilities. It is more difficult to correspond to a greater grace than to a smaller. Satan makes more prolonged and vigorous assaults on those who have been more distinguished by God. In their case a small matter becomes more serious, and a thing might be a mortal sin in them which would be no more than venial in others. If any have received little there will be little required of them; if they are less favored it will take less to save their souls, while, on the other hand, it is written: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required: and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand *the more*" (Luke xii, 48).

Doubtless many fail for the very reason that they have received so much from God. Many are thoroughly bad, being Catholics, and incur the fulness of God's wrath, who would have made a very decent show as heretics or pagans; and it may be that many will be saved for the very smallness of their graces, and because their disobedience is excused by their knowing only imperfectly the will of their Lord. And again, additional graces from God, while increasing the difficulties of the struggle, increase also the penalties of failure. The punishments of the lost vary exactly with the degree of their unfaithfulness; and he who has sinned with abundant knowledge and grace is far worse off than one who has been both ignorant and weak. For these reasons the saints have shrunk from receiving the greater graces of God, such as priestly consecration and favors like miracles and ecstasies; they felt that the responsibility and such privileges exceeded their dignity.

Judas was overwhelmed with benefits from God. He was called to be an Apostle, he had the power of miracles, he saw Jesus Christ face to face, and went through the wonderful training of those three

years; yet he destroyed his own life. The thief on the Cross knew nothing of Jesus till the very moment before death, saw no miracles, heard only a few rare words; the deeds of his earlier life were probably far worse than the petty dishonesties of Judas, yet he is one of the blessed, canonized by the words of Our Lord Himself. If we did not know the last stages in the history of these two men, we should certainly have supposed that the inequality of their two lots was in favor of Judas. The day of judgment will correct many like mistakes, and manifest many other instances where the last has become first and the first last.

4. Among the cases of varying spiritual endowments there are very numerous instances of extreme destitution. In some men there seems to be absolutely no conception of supernatural truths, and a sheer incapacity to grasp that class of ideas; there seem to be no opportunities afforded for knowing better or doing better; there seem to be none of those impulses of divine grace which awaken remorse or hesitation, or the consciousness of the void where God is not. Even when death approaches, the time when all things take a new aspect, when prejudice and obstinacy break down, when the heart is softened and turns spontaneously to God, even then, in many cases, there is no evidence of the smallest glimmering of a religious sense, and men go on, unheeding as the brute beasts, into the presence of their Judge. In particular cases charity may incline us to indulge hopes of their salvation, but in general we are certain that many of such must be lost forever. Still we cannot presume to say that they have been treated less generously by God than others. The cause of their spiritual destitution is to be sought in previous deliberate acts of their own. The power and obstinacy of the human will are great: they can contend with the Almighty Himself. There is such a thing as resisting the Holy Ghost and stemming the flow of His graces; it

is a common sin, and may even become a national sin as with the Jews; according to St. Stephen's words: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears. You always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you also. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them who foretold of the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers" (Acts vii, 51, 52). Such a state of spiritual destitution is not due to the ordinance of God, but to the perversity of those who have stifled graces at the first, and so have stopped all further progress. If they are condemned it will be, not because of graces withheld from them by God, but because of the graces which they have received and neglected. A greater prodigality of grace would only have increased their responsibility and their guilt, and caused them to receive a greater condemnation.

5. There are yet others to whom the Gospel has never been preached, who have never received the great sacrament of regeneration, who are cut off from all external opportunities of salvation, living in the savagery of uncivilized lands, or the worse savagery of our great cities. Their temporal and their spiritual lot are equally miserable, and neither offers any compensation for the deficiencies of the other. What shall we say as to such? They are certainly outside the ordinary dispensation of Providence, yet there are the unexplored and undescribed realms of His uncovenanted mercies open to them. It is certain that their future lot cannot be the lowest and worst of all; it certainly will be better, at its worst, than that of a vast multitude of Christians. Such persons cannot rise to the same height as the Christian can, but also they cannot fall so low or incur such punishment. They simply cannot commit the sins that a more favored person can. Many duties which bind under grave sin have not been laid upon them; they cannot desecrate the Sacraments, they

cannot sin against the light and resist the Holy Ghost as we continually do. If Sodom and Gomorrha will find it more tolerable at the day of judgment than many who saw Jesus Christ and heard His words, so will those others at the last day find more tender consideration and large allowance than those who during life were so much more blessed by God. Many a Christian who has been treated with abundant generosity will vainly wish that he could exchange with those who seemed so little favored on earth.

How God will actually deal in the future life with these destitute ones we cannot know. It is His secret. But we know many general truths about His Providence which are a sufficient answer to the questions of our curiosity. "God made the little and the great, and He has equally care of all" Wisd. vi, 8). Redemption is as wide as creation. Our Lord wishes all to be saved, and died on the Cross for all without exception. God has revealed Himself to us as specially loving sinners for their very sinfulness. His patience is infinite. His pity for human weakness, His love for each individual soul, He makes far more generous allowance than we know of. It is certain also that God's justice could not allow any to suffer in the next world except for his own deliberate fault; and that none is finally rejected by Him unless he has consciously made his choice and obstinately rejected God.

6. The result is that we have no reason to be troubled about the inequalities of God's dealings with us and others, as if we were sure of salvation and they of perdition. God's power is not fettered, nor are the operations of His wisdom and goodness limited to what we can see. He is able to redress the balance of equality, and make compensation in ways and times of His own choosing. Let us rather look at home and not be too confident about ourselves. We, perhaps, are in greater peril than those whom we pity, and need to take a little

more care about our own souls. We must not suppose that we shall be saved through a mere accident of birth; and with many, the fact that they belong to the true Church of Christ is nothing more than that. They have never sought to imbibe the true spirit of their Religion: they do not value the gift of Faith, so that there is little or no merit in it; they do not use their sublime knowledge and high graces as others do who are on a much lower level of religion. Among Mohammedans, Jews, and members of fanatical half-Christian bodies, how many there are who put to shame by their enthusiasm, generosity, steadfastness, and consistency, the numerous half-hearted, time-serving, timid, cowardly Catholics. It would be incredible unless we saw it, that members of the oldest Christian Church, fortified by the Holy Ghost and the Body of Christ, possessing the full revelation of God, and looking for eternal life, should be so indifferent, so negligent, so wicked, as many are; but it is explained by the maxim, "The corruption of the best becomes the worst." When we see how many there are of this sort, and how whole nations have fallen from their high estate and proved unworthy of the great trust committed to them by God, we may learn that special privileges are counter-balanced by special perils, and that those do not always come out best in the end whom God has honored with the most abundant graces. The greatest difficulty is not so much about the salvation of the less privileged, as of the most highly favored. Many are exercised about reconciling with God's mercy the probable loss of so many souls outside the limits of the one true Church; the great problem rather is, how we can reconcile the salvation of certain great classes of Catholics with the rigor of God's unapproachable holiness.

THE EQUALITY OF ALL MEN

"The rich and the poor have met together: the Lord is the maker of them both."—Prov. xxii, 2.

I. The doctrine of the equality of all men is one of the great revelations, social as well as religious, of Christianity. Before our Lord's time it was unknown. The Jews, indeed, had the germ of the idea: they recognized the equality of all the children of Abraham, though their position and functions might be different; but they limited equality to their own nation, and held the Gentiles in horror. The other races of antiquity would have rejected as unsocial, unpatriotic, unnatural, the idea that the outer barbarians, that their own slaves, that men of other cities were their equals. The effects of their views were seen in their cruel wars, the wholesale slaughter of the conquered, or their reduction to a state of slavery; also, in the barbarous treatment of their slaves, and in the sacrifice of human lives for mere pastime in the gladiatorial shows. The new religion, Universal or Catholic, was to weld the numerous races and societies of the world into a great unity, to elevate them all, to bind them together by charity; and the idea which was the root of this vast transformation was that of brotherhood. Hence, the equality of all mankind. There was to be neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male or female, among those who had put on Christ. (Gal. iii, 27, 28.) Our Lord and His Church proclaimed this new charter of human dignity. They established it, not by violent revolution with injustice and bloodshed, not even by legislation, which so easily becomes a dead letter, but by the example of self-abasement

and of charity to all men, by planting in men's hearts certain ideas, which germinated, grew and entered into their lives, and became incorporated in the Christian character.

We hear a great deal in our days about the equality of all men; it is getting to be recognized in some sense or another as a first principle; yet, it is contrary to the spontaneous impulses of corrupt human nature. From the days of our Lord there has been a continual struggle to establish and maintain it practically and thoroughly. It is forever being covertly attacked in one or other of its applications. Many profess it and fail to practise it. Many others insist upon equality merely because they suffer under existing inequality, and they are glad to forget it as soon as they have a chance of lording it over others. Those who uphold it on principle and consistently are very few. The fact that it is an important element of the Christian system is sufficient indication that, however the world may admire it in theory, it will hardly put it into practise effectually. A principle which belongs to Christianity becomes unreal when cut off from its source. If equality among men is to be real and permanent, it is necessary that it should be grounded on Christian ideas.

What were these ideas on which Christian equality was based? (1) On creation. God "hath made of one all mankind to dwell upon the face of the earth" (Acts xvii, 26). We are made by the hand of God, but are drawn from the slime of the earth; all are equal in dignity and in lowliness. Go far enough back and all are brothers; no one can despise another on the score of origin. (2) On the value of the soul. The soul is the chief constituent of the man, his noblest part, and is of infinite value in the sight of God. It is His direct creation. The body is a lower element; it is a temporary dwelling-place; it must be cast off, must decay, and be

reformed before it is fit to be permanently united to the soul. (3) All rank and wealth and cultivation are temporary possessions, extrinsic to the man himself. They mark men for certain present purposes. Heavy responsibilities are attached to them. But they add nothing to the real value and dignity of the man himself, and are in themselves no title to respect. A king, or a millionaire, or a man of genius may be the most contemptible of beings before God and man, but the poorest peasant may become one of the princes in the house of God. (4) All men have been redeemed at an infinite cost. Jesus Christ died not for a nation, or a class, but for all; and He would endure death again, were it necessary, for the salvation of one single soul. (5) In the next life there will be no differences, except such as arise from greater or less fidelity in the service of God. (6) With God there is no respect for the person of the great. All positions are equally honorable before Him. The only dignity He recognizes is that of virtue. His servants alone are exceedingly honorable, they are a royal race, a kingly priesthood. On this basis of religious equality all other kinds are founded. Social, political and legal equality are all related to religion as their original source. The Christian ideal is that every man should have equal liberty, equal rights, equal opportunities in life, equal consideration, charity and respect; and all this, not because he is of such a race, or of noble birth, or of great wealth, not even because he is a man, but because he is a son of God, made in His image, and numbered among the brethren and heirs of Jesus Christ. Filled with this idea, each man respects himself as the equal of all others. He respects all others as his equals; everyone demands as his right, and accords to others, the same honor and the same charity. These aspirations passed gradually into civil life and formed one of the chief sources of that per-

sonal dignity and freedom which distinguish the Christian from all other civilizations.

II. The question of social and legal equality is not considered generally to have much to do with religion; it is thought that, when once mankind have awakened to the sense of their rights in this matter, they are perfectly capable of securing them by their own political efforts. This might do very well if it were sufficient that each man should vindicate his own individual rights and if each were strong enough to do so; but large numbers, the majority even, are weak, and cannot fight their own battles. It is more important, therefore, in establishing a system of equality, that men should be prompt to recognize the rights of others than to establish their own. This is where the natural spirit of men is opposed to equality; this is where the influence of the Christian spirit is required. The pride and the selfishness that are in every man are more inveterate in the unreligious man, and will never brook the admission that he is no more than the equal of all other men. The tendency to self-aggrandizement depends for its satisfaction, more in depressing and domineering over others than on exceptional personal merit, and so it is in opposition to the doctrine of universal equality. However low a man may be, he must make himself out to be better than some one else. The convict even will take pride in being a second-class man, or a first-class man. Everyone grasps at that which raises him above others; if he has any temporary superiority he tries to make it permanent; from official he would make it personal; from personal, hereditary. These natural tendencies are fatal to a systematic equality; no legislation, no mental cultivation, no public opinion will exorcise them. The religion of Jesus Christ, complete in its doctrines and spiritual aids,—the Catholic Church, in fact—is the only force on earth

which is able to cope with pride and selfishness, and to enforce that respect for weakness which is essential if all are to enjoy full equality.

This position will be strengthened by observing the arbitrary limitations to equality in countries which boast loudly of possessing it, but which have not grounded it on true Christian principles. In this great model Republic of the world, this classic land of equality, where every man is valued for his own manly qualities without regard to his ancestry or the ornaments he wears on the outside of his coat, slavery lingered long after it had ceased in every other country of equal civilization. England boasts justly of asserting during centuries the independence of individual citizens, and of being the fount and model of constitutional liberties in most other countries, and of making free by mere contact with her soil every slave who lands upon it. Yet England is hardly purged, as yet, from the stain of slavery. She was the principal offender in establishing the African slave-trade three centuries ago; she sold her own subjects into slavery, by way of protesting against that Church which had abolished slavery in the early Middle Ages, and many are still living who were slaves under English law.

Even in these democratic days of equality the scales of public justice too often incline in favor of the strong. The crimes most severely punished are those against property, *i. e.*, roughly speaking, the offences of the weak against the privileged classes. Stern vengeance awaits the hungry child who steals a turnip from a field. But there are other classes of crime which go almost entirely unpunished; crimes of heartless brutality on the one side, of irreparable cruel wrong on the other; crimes of the strong against the innocence of youth and the weakness of sex and social position; crimes more lasting in effect, and more destructive to society, than

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any dishonesty or, perhaps, even homicide. What of the law, the guardian of social order, the avenger of all wrongs? The law escapes the difficult function of recognizing rights in the weak, by declaring that these wrongs are not crimes; they only amount to vice; and vice is a sacred thing. Vice is a department of personal liberties, and as such must be treated with that tenderness, forbearance and respect, which formerly belonged to virtue. Legislators can hardly be moved to pass laws against the crimes that go by the name of vice; but if they do, magistrates will not commit under these laws, juries will not convict, judges will not sentence. And wisely so, in their own generation; for all of them belong to the class of the strong, and many to the class of offenders; they are ready enough to keep down to the level of general equality those who might domineer over them; but they will never concede equal legal rights to the weaker classes to enable them to protect their honor and their happiness against the tyranny of the strong.

III. Christianity, as embodied in the Catholic Church, is not only the source but is the only consistent upholder of the equality of all men. The Church has ever been the champion of the rights of the weak. She attacked slavery at a time when it was deeply rooted in the customs and social organization of every nation. Not only did she emancipate the slaves, but she showed that she recognized in them the fulness of a human dignity by admitting them to Holy Orders, and making them spiritual superiors of their former masters. Bishops and Popes forced from tyrannical kings the charters of their people's liberties, destroyed the oriental notion that the rulers are the masters and owners of their subjects. The Church restored to women that position of dignity which paganism and Mohammedanism refused to them, and which modern

irreligion is doing its best to destroy. She has assigned to them, too, a most prominent share in the work of sanctifying and saving souls; tasks which give place to all their special gifts and energies, and which do not unsex them by thrusting them into the rougher sphere of work which belongs to man. Infancy, helpless and innocent, has always suffered terribly under the hands of ancient and modern paganism. The legislation of the Church and the solemn ceremonies of Baptism have protected the weakness of infancy and surrounded it with a halo of sanctity. But where Christianity declines, there revives again the reckless destruction of infant life, which was the disgrace of ancient Greece and modern China. The poor, the aged, the crippled, the leper, the lunatic owe it to Catholic charity that their natural rights and dignity have been recognized; merely as men they would never have obtained that recognition from the world, but the Church demanded it for them as the suffering members of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the Catholic system her equal consideration for every man as a man is everywhere apparent. A prince and a day-laborer will enter the confessional one after the other, and kneel side by side at the communion-rails. Any man, if only he have talent and integrity, may reach the supreme dignities of the Church. Popes have been taken from the plow; monarchs have knelt in supplication before the shrine of a canonized beggarman. The great and noble lay aside their rank for the service of the Church. An ambassador or a general will take the place of a boy in serving Mass. On Maundy Thursday, princes of the Church or the State wash the feet of twelve poor men, and serve them at table. Confraternities exist in Italy for laying out and burying the dead poor. The members are of every condition of life. They come to their duties masked in a habit and cowl; no one knows them,

and it often happens that a wealthy noble and a petty tradesman are engaged side by side in the same humble offices of charity. The courtesy of every man to every other is specially noticeable in a Catholic country; and in a land where faith is shrinking before infidelity, there also die out kindliness and good manners. Courtesy grows from the sense of equality and mutual respect; inequality begets condescension or cringing, and when this is replaced by an equality which is not grounded on Christian principle it results in a worse familiarity which is met by a proud reserve. Inequality dishonors, as equality honors, all who are concerned with it. A Negro Wesleyan minister has pointed out that only in the Catholic and the Mohammedan religions can the colored man aspire to equality with other races. He mentions a Negro professor in a Spanish university and the Negro saints honored in the Calendar. He notes, also, how Catholic conquerors of inferior races have admitted them to social equality, and contrasts them with the latest conquerors of India, who extend to the natives an abundant philanthropy, but never the equality of brotherhood in Christ.

The Christian doctrine of equality has had to struggle long and hard to gain acceptance; at times it was almost crushed out of existence under the weight of the pride and arrogance, the privileges and empty dignities that accumulated round certain corrupt monarchies up to the time of the French Revolution. But the ideals of Christianity had entered deeper into the souls of men, and even those who rejected the authority of the Church claimed their share in the birthright she had brought them. Up to the present day the passion for equality has been spreading and growing in force throughout the world. A great and true idea can not die. It may be corrupted and misinterpreted and discredited. Its

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energy may break forth in destruction under violent suppression, but, sooner or later, it must prevail. Either with or without its Christian basis and safeguards universal equality will obtain recognition. The only question is, what form it will take and how its force will be directed.

IV. There are two methods of asserting equality, or, rather, two forms of equality. The one is grounded on conceit of oneself and jealousy of others. It is contentious, self-assertive, insolent, rebellious against authority. This is unchristian equality; its formula is: "I am as good as you." As it is not founded on the broad basis of Christian charity, it is partial, does not extend to all, and amounts only to a new system of inequality. Many persons look with grave apprehension on the spread of ideas of equality among inferior races or classes, for they can conceive of no other form of it than what has just been described. They have lived in a state of unchristian inequality, holding aloof from their inferior brethren, despising or even hating them, sharing with them none of the gifts they have received from God. They resent the approach of an equality which will no longer render homage to the empty symbols of an extinct value, to the accidental circumstances of birth, or color, or wealth, or size, or fine clothes. What they expect is a system of equality animated by the same feelings of narrowness, pride and hostility which they have always indulged towards others. They endeavor, therefore, to stem the tide of human aspirations for their own security; but in doing this they are only preparing calamity for themselves by helping to infuse bitterness into the new relations between classes that are now springing up.

There is another kind of equality very different from the former; it is that which the Christian Church has always labored to

establish. Its foundation is humility as to oneself, generosity and respect for others as representing to us the person of Jesus Christ. Its formula is: "You are as good as I am." From this kind of equality there is nothing to be feared. It is the antidote to the other false kind of equality, encouraging, not arrogance, but self-respect; not insolent familiarity, but courteous deference. Shallow and unworthy pretension will lose the respect they once commanded; but, under all circumstances, noble lives and the tender virtues of Christianity will receive due homage. All those who show proper respect to the equality of their fellow-men will themselves meet with abundant respect.

The true Christian sense of equality, unlike the other, is a bond of social order, in that it helps men to recognize and bow to legitimate superiority. Authority is not exercised with arrogance, nor is subjection felt to be a burden, when the substantial equality of the two parties is fully recognized. The religious man knows that distinctions of grade and office are necessary for social order; he knows that all superiority is a delegation from God, and that in bowing to it he is not sacrificing his equality before a fellow-man, but paying homage to God Himself.

It is a duty we owe to God to recognize the equality of all men with ourselves and to respect the Divine Image which is impressed upon them. Our duty to society, as well as to religion, requires that we should help in raising the general level of life, that we should freely give what we have freely received, and impart to others a share in our intellectual, spiritual, political and social advantages. What could be more unlike the spirit of our Lord than to keep our privileges to ourselves; to keep others down instead of trying to elevate them, and to maintain ourselves in a position of superiority that is not our due. We should impress ourselves with

the feeling that in the household of God no one is an inferior or contemptible, but that all are His sons, and all are equal. Our sentiments towards all mankind should be those of the American ambassador towards his fellow-citizens. Asked insolently by a grandee of Spain if he was of noble birth, he answered: "Yes, in our country all are noble, for every man is a king."

INEQUALITIES BETWEEN MEN

"Let every soul be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God, and these that are, are ordained of God. . . . Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.—Rom. xiii, 1-5.

I. In the last discourse we considered that great doctrine of Jesus Christ, that all mankind are equal; a doctrine most important not only as an element of religion, but also as an element of social order. It is a truth that all would do well to accept and diffuse, even in their own material interests. Many fear that the realization of this truth would lower them, while elevating others who are below them; but even so, they would profit more by accepting it with a good grace than by waiting till it is forced upon them. The great multitudes in the lower strata of society having caught a glimpse of this great truth from religion, and having been enabled by education to verify its truth and its expediency, will be denied it no longer. Everywhere we find a newborn, vigorous desire for the recognition of human equality and dignity. It asserts itself sometimes peaceably, sometimes with bitterness, sometimes even with violence and bloodshed.

What is the sight that meets the eye of the young generations as they go forth proclaiming their equal rights with all mankind? Inequalities of the extremest kind between man and man prevailing everywhere. Society is arranged in a long series of upper and lower classes. Men are all either superiors or inferiors, rulers or ruled, now exercising some authority, now bowing before it. Some

have privileges, power, education, riches, titles, the respect of all; others, the majority, have not only possessed none of these things, but have for ages been compelled to bow down and worship them. Men of different races or of different classes in the same country are separated by contrasts so extreme that they hardly seem to belong to the same species of beings. Not only are their exterior circumstances different, but there is no community of ideas or sympathy between them. In every land, through long periods of history, the upper have regarded the lower grades of men with superlative disdain, as if they were without reason or feeling, made to be servants and chattels, as if they were no more than brute beasts. And even into better times the great gulf between classes has survived, cutting off communication and sympathy. The lower strata look upwards with jealousy, envy, hatred and ever-increasing desire to rise in revolt, to turn the scales and to seize on these advantages from which they have been so long excluded.

Thousands, millions, are moved to indignation at the sight of the actual inequalities of fortune and of estimation. They ask how this state of things can be reconciled with the truth that all men are equal. They ask how it can be just that one man should be allowed to heap honor upon honor, and accumulate more wealth than he can possibly use, while another's life is a continual struggle with starvation and death. They ask how a system can be tolerated, in which out of two infants absolutely alike in appearance, who have done nothing to merit different treatment, one should by mere fact of birth inherit lands and titles and dominion over others, while the other infant is destined to obscurity, servitude and toil. They read, further, the terrible history of human wrongs, of the universal abuse of power, of the cruelties inflicted by man on man, of the frivolous waste of wealth by those who

never earned it, and of the toilsome, degraded lives of those who produced that wealth.

Then there arises a burning thirst for justice and equality, a desire to level all things, to do away for ever with all superiority and inferiority. Some, in their hatred of inequality, would not even tolerate that which rises from superior character and virtue. As the Athenians banished Aristides the Just, because they could no longer bear the predominance of his virtue, so there are communities at this day, civilized, as civilization goes, who treat the pure, benevolent, laborious, religious lives of certain of their members as a danger to the commonwealth and punish them for rising above the common sordid level. Threatenings are heard, getting deeper and more numerous every day, of a new revolution, not political or religious like those of the past, but more terrible and more thorough than those,—a social revolution, which shall reverse the whole established order of things and avenge the wrongs of centuries.

All this, excessive and mad as it is, is right in principle, but it proceeds on the wrong lines and has overshot the mark. It is a reaction from the equally excessive and mad doctrines of human inequality, which prevailed so widely in spite of Christianity; a reaction against centuries of tyranny and absolute mastery over the lives, the possession, the honor of subjects; a reaction against these laws which gave the lords of the soil most unjust, cruel and immoral powers over their tenants; against all these customs which ignored men's rights and dignity, and exalted a few at the expense of the many. There is reaction, too, against the wrongs of the present day; wrongs inflicted, not so much by the ambition or lust of the few as formerly, but by society generally, by economical conditions and the general pressure of greed and competition. Consequently there has arisen an excessive and unreasonable hatred

of all inequalities, which is undermining the foundations of all authority and social order. In all this we see an example of how sowing the wind leads to reaping the whirlwind; and of how evil principles lead to evil results of an opposite kind, in the excesses of the revolt they have provoked. Inequalities there must be, and a legitimate use of them involves no injury to the general rights of equality. But when the duties of high position are forgotten, and its powers are perverted to inordinate self-glorification and the oppression of others, the sufferers rush to the opposite extreme, and demand an impracticable and injurious equality. It is difficult to know which is more destructive of good order and the public weal, an unchristian system of inequality, or an unchristian system of equality.

It is not only those who suffer by the irregularities of life who require to be reconciled to them, but even those who profit by them and are content will feel at times the question ringing in their minds, like a kind of reproach: "Why should I enjoy such great blessings, while my brother-man, more deserving, perhaps, than myself, has none of these things, and humbles himself in my presence?" Let us seek a general explanation of this problem of Divine Providence.

II. (1) It is not a contradiction of the doctrine of universal equality to say that God has established inequalities. They, too, are universal; they are necessary; they are reconcilable with equality. In all God's works there is unity and yet variety. Among His angels there are different orders and functions, different grades of nearness to Him, and of perfection. In the house of God there are many offices; some high, some low, but all necessary for the completeness of the whole. Mankind are no exception to the law; there is no dead level of monotony among them. They have to render

to God various services under various conditions: some in sorrow and some in joy; some in conflict and some in peace; some by learning and others in the simplicity of ignorance; some in toiling for the necessaries of life, others by devoting their leisure to the general good; some in authority and some in subjection; some in riches and health, others in poverty and pain. The infinite variety of the Divine Perfections could not be reflected in human lives, if there were only one type, the same in all individuals. Each one has to reproduce some note: one a deep, and another a high one, and from the whole there arises a perfect harmony. There must be, therefore, every variety of inequality among the servants of God; some must be little and some must be great; but "he hath equally care for all" (Wisd. vi, 8). It is for the Lord to choose what duty He requires from each of His laborers; it is for them to accept it without enquiry or complaint, and to do it with all their strength. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Or hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor" (Rom. ix, 20, 21).

(2) The material creation shows the beauty that comes from variety and the uses of inequality. "What a tender loveliness there is in a broad, well-cultivated valley, spread out in the glow of the sunshine, diversified with hills and crops and pastures, fertilized by a broad bright river. Hard by is a range of mountains, bare granite peaks, half covered with snow, shrouded in chilly mists, uninhabitable, bearing no crops, supporting hardly any life. They seem useless, and once, as many thought, horrible as well. But they are absolutely necessary; they are the source of the richness and beauty of the valley. They stop the passing clouds, hoard their moisture and dispense it gradually in a thousand streams.

The avalanche, the piled-up ruins of shattered peaks, the uncontrollable torrent, these do not mean ruin and inutility; these are the processes by which the mountain mass is gradually disintegrated, converted into rich new soil, and spread by rivers over whole continents, making good their waste and renewing their exhausted fertility. Again, all life on earth would cease if the pathless, unharvested expanse of salt waters were dried up suddenly and replaced by a cultivatable surface. Unprofitable forest lands, too, are found to contribute their share to men's support by modifying the climate, affording shelter and regulating rainfall. Once more, sunshine is the very source of all life, force and splendor; darkness is the emblem of horror, misery and death; yet worse than any gloom is the dazed weariness that one feels in the unrestful glare of the long Arctic day of summer. The perfection of nature results from the inequalities of light and darkness, land and sea, life and death. Among mankind the wicked, who are the most useless, most hideous, most noxious of all created things—even they serve to draw out the excellencies of God's works in the world; they glorify God unwittingly while revolting against Him; they give opportunities to men of practising many virtues, and to God of manifesting His patience, His holiness and His justice.

(3) The existence and the progress of human society, men's welfare and happiness, make inequalities necessary. There must be different offices and duties in a society, and they cannot all be of an equally high class. The duty of directing and the duty of obeying must be in different hands; there must be an executive and legislators, and the multitude must submit to be ruled. Otherwise there would be no order or unity of action. It is necessary, too, that there should be special capacities for different positions, even for the lowest; and that there should be natural inferiorities

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and incapacities. An army in which every man was qualified to act as general would be in a most dangerous state, unless they all practised a superhuman self-effacement. If every man were a brilliant genius the world would be absolutely unendurable. Even if human capacities and human desires admitted of an absolute equality in all things, it would be as utterly impracticable for the business of life as if the earth were all dry land without an ocean, or the year one long sunshine without night or winter. As we shall see later, it is a physical impossibility for all men to be rich; and if all were poor, vast avenues of virtue and useful work would be closed.

(4) The unchangeable facts of human nature make inequalities inevitable. Climate, country, occupation, food mold the outward form and the inward dispositions of different individuals and different races. We have the power of changing our circumstances and characters. No two men are absolutely alike; they vary and transmit their variations, and these are combined from different sources in all sorts of proportions. Every one's views, desires and actions are peculiar to himself. Hence, some are strong and some are weak; some have a magnetic power of ruling, others crave for guidance; one is moderate, another rushes to excess; some spend and some hoard; some must exercise their muscles, others must lead a life of thought. With all these sources of difference, men cannot be tied down to an arbitrary rule of equality. Make them all equal, and in a month they would all be classified afresh into higher and lower grades, and that in very much the same way as at present. For, on the whole, without the help of any cut and dry system on ruled paper, most men manage to fall into the position most suited to their acquired or inherited capabilities. It would be the grossest tyranny and the grossest

folly to attempt to enforce a rigid system of equality on infinitely various beings—a system not according with the facts of human nature or the necessities of practical life.

III. Human equality and human inequality are not, as they often seem, incompatible with each other. Each is true, each is necessary to society. It is only by an unnatural exaggeration of either that it is made to seem opposed to the other. The humbler classes will never envy legitimate superiority when it is borne with humility and used with justice; and respect paid to our dignity as men will never impair the deference which we owe to authority. It is only when the privileged classes grow intoxicated with pride and trample on the rights of their humbler equals that these find the weight of the inequality too heavy to be endured and seek to cast it off. The two principles are exaggerated till they became contradictory. One party refuses to degrade itself by recognizing the equality of its inferiors; the other party thinks it degradation to tolerate any kind of superiority. Hence, the struggles that so often rend society. Christian teaching alone can reconcile the two things, pointing out the true nature of each and its limitations, showing men how they can be free and yet submissive, unequal and yet equal. Under the influence of religion it is easy to endure the necessary inequalities of society. The Christian knows that God, the Master of all, has so arranged things that he is content. He has a work to do for God and his own soul, and he can do it only under the conditions that God has imposed. He sees no dishonor in any service, in any condition of life, that God appoints for him. He knows, too, that God has arranged his duties according to his capacities, and all things for his best advantage; and that his condition of life is the one in which he can gain most happiness, and most surely save his soul.

While he makes all due efforts for his temporal advancement, he feels that, while he strives, it is God who gives the increase, and he is contented with any result, even though he be less successful than others.

It helps us also to endure inferiority of position, if we remember that God will reward us, not according to the position we have held in this world, but according to the fidelity with which we have done our work, whatever it may be. It is not the importance and prominence of the work we have done for God and men that will be the measure of our reward, but it will the supernatural quality of our lives, our humility, resignation to God's will and love for Him. There is scope for these virtues in the life of the street-sweeper as well as in the life of the millionaire.

Contradictory though it may seem, contentment with inequalities of fortune, position, etc., is rendered easier by the sentiment of one's own natural and spiritual dignity, and of one's equality with those who are more favored. One does not grudge a temporary privilege to another, knowing that it is assigned him for a sufficient purpose, and that a substantial equality underlies the superficial inequality.

Our duties, then, are these: (1) To recognize and reverence the authority of all who are set over us by God, and to see in them, not the persons of men, but the representatives of God. Naturally they may be our equals, but by office they are our superiors, exercizing by delegation the divine authority. (2) We should be contented with our own state of life, with all its inferiorities and privations; never allowing ourselves to feel ashamed of it, but esteeming it as honorable because it is an office in God's household. (3) We should remember that the only true dignity and superiority to others consists in our quality of sons of God and members of

His Church. The world does not admit the Christian theory of things, but it often does homage to this theory of a man's real worth. How often do we see that the world despises or hates those who hold the highest positions and the greatest wealth; and, that on the other hand, it recognizes the dignity and honors the work of those whose only title of honor is that they have been upright as men and faithful as Christians!

V. THE STATE OF WEALTH

"Blessed is the rich man that is found without blemish, and that hath not gone after gold, nor put his trust in money nor in treasures."—Eccles. xxxi, 8.

I. The relation of riches and poverty is a most anxious problem at this day, and around it the most furious contentions rage. The growth of poverty, and with it of discontent, is one of the most threatening dangers to society. Wealth, too, is itself a danger; for its shameful abuse has evoked the great movement toward a social revolution. The line of wealth and poverty divides mankind into two great bodies, hostile to one another, and arming for the movement of deadly struggle. Christian union and social union are alike in danger of disruption, and beyond that looms the reign of rapine and violence.

The solution of social problems lies with religion alone. If a machine is to run properly we must understand its nature and treat it accordingly: apply it to purposes or use it in ways not provided for in its construction and it will do more harm than good. In social questions it is never to be forgotten that God is the author of social, as well as of the material order of things; that, to understand and use them properly, we must consider what was the intention of divine Providence in instituting them; that their first object is to glorify God by the salvation of souls; and that the revelation through Jesus Christ is meant to renew mankind socially as well as spiritually. The present pass to which things have come between rich and poor is not due to any natural hostility between the two states, but to the fact that rich and poor have forgotten the principles just stated. The two conditions are ordained by God and are

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intended to serve a common purpose, the evolution of human society; and they would work harmoniously together were it not that their nature is misunderstood, and that they are misused.

There are two views, the Christian and the unchristian, about riches and poverty; they are diametrically opposed to one another, and so produce opposite results. The materialist view of the world in general is, that wealth is the *summum bonum,* the one thing desirable, the adequate object of all human endeavors, the measure of success, and of a man's value and usefulness in life. It is the first duty of every man, therefore, to seek incessantly for wealth, to grasp all he can of it, to expend all his energies upon it. It is a man's own when he gets it, he owes none of it to anyone, he is under no responsibility for its use, he may do exactly as he pleases with it; and the best thing he can do with it is to employ it for the accumulation of still more wealth, even beyond his extremest requirements. This idea becomes the rule and measure of everything; the education of the young is arranged according to this view of human life and duties; the movements of the world, the growth of populations, the advance of civilization, are all regarded in their relation to the making of money.

When all men, rich and poor alike, are fully imbued with a fierce desire for wealth there follows a fierce struggle for the possession of it; and of this the usual result is that the strong appropriate much more than their due share, while the weak are trampled under foot, and hardly secure even the minimum which, as men, they are entitled to receive from the soil they live on. Then follow mutual jealousy, suspicion, hatred. Each class stands on the watch to take advantage of the other; each regards the other as its most dangerous foe. With the rich there is no security, with the poor there is no contentment with their lot.

It is evident that social warfare of this kind is not a pleasant, or an economical way of maintaining one's rights and settling disputed points; and doctrinaires then set to work on new systems for the reorganization of society. Projects are devised, all more or less unchristian, all more or less ignoring the facts of human nature, and, therefore, anti-social and impracticable. Vain hopes are excited, beautiful impossibilities are proposed to men's expectations, all to be disappointed. The object generally aimed at is to destroy all inequalities of every kind between man and man. To carry this out, some want to abolish poverty and make all men rich; others would abolish wealth and have every man to toil for his daily bread; in either case all temporal goods would be divided among all the population, and there would no longer exist the division of classes into rich and poor. By means of certain panaceas—education, co-operation, free trade or protection, industrial and social changes, carried out either by violent revolution or by quieter legislation—it is expected that a new epoch of universal harmony and abundance and contentment will be brought about. But some deeper and more stable foundation is required for so great an edifice. Legislation is not omnipotent, violence begets unending violence; uniformity of system is not to be enforced from without on millions of men of a hundred different nationalities. The religion of Jesus Christ, working in the hearts of men by divine grace, can alone supply a principle, universal, deep-rooted, powerful enough to unite all classes into one brotherhood.

We have now to cast upon this subject the bright light of Christian doctrine and of God's ordinances in society, and we shall see that the distinction of classes into rich and poor is of divine appointment, and economically unavoidable. We shall consider the nature of poverty and wealth and the providential purposes of each; and

we shall learn that if those of each class would bow their necks to the yoke of religion and guide their lives by Christian principle, warfare between them would cease, their interests would be reconciled, and a harmony of mutual usefulness would be established.

II. We have first to consider the nature and the origin of the state of wealth.

The raw material of all wealth comes only from the earth on which we live. It consists of the things we use for food, clothing, lodging, adornment, amusement. It consists in the harvests of corn and fruit, the wood of the forests, coal, iron, gold, clay, minerals generally, the beasts that are nourished by the earth, the fish that are produced in the sea. The laboring classes extract this wealth; they then transport it from place to place, they work it up into the forms required for its use, into bread, and clothing, and houses, and the rest; and thus they add to it a value much beyond that of the raw products.

Each man can produce much more than the value which he expends on his own maintenance, but still not enough to make him rich. If each man could keep all that he produces, and no more than what he himself produces, no one could grow very rich. A man becomes rich only when he begins to employ the labor of other men, and when he is enabled to appropriate to himself the difference between what his workmen earn and what it costs to keep them; *i. e.*, the difference between their wages and the total value of their work. A man who works alone in his own shop, or his own patch of ground, will not earn a great deal more than his living. He begins to get rich when he employs many journeymen, and can by their assistance open many shops or cultivate many fields. The surplus earnings of these laborers are what makes him rich. A man may have large estates, mills, machinery, but he can draw no large

income from them unless he has a number of other men to work them for him and earn wealth for him. Thus the worker retains only a part of what he produces, and out of the surplus he creates and maintains the class of wealthy men. So it is not the rich who support the poor by giving them employment, but it is the poor who support the rich by gratuitous labor, by labor over and above the quantity they have been paid for. In whatever way a man has acquired his fortune, whether it be by inheritance, by speculation, or by highly paid services, such as those of the physician, the jockey, the judge, the prizefighter, by the labor of slaves or serfs, or workmen, it is always true that the abundance he enjoys comes from the surplus unpaid labor of those who originally extracted wealth from the earth.

It takes the surplus labor of a great many men to produce a large, regular income. For every rich man there must be a much larger number of poor men working for him. The more rich men there are, and the larger the fortunes of the rich, so much more numerous must be those who labor and are poor. So it is physically impossible that all men should be rich; it is physically impossible that the rich should be more than a small proportion of the whole community. It is conceivable that all men should be poor; it is possible, under proper social arrangements, that all men should have work and sufficient earnings for decent and happy lives; but it is not conceivable that all men, or even that a majority of men, should become positively rich.

If fortunes increase enormously it means that more men are working for each rich man; if the number of rich becomes disproportionately large, it means that poor men have been working harder and producing more, or else that a larger proportion of their earnings is taken from them, and that so much the less is left to

each. As a matter of fact, both these things take place in a country where wealth is increasing. Returns then show that there are so many more men who have so much larger incomes; but this advance is not due entirely to a greater production of wealth; a considerable portion is only a transfer to the rich of certain wealth which previously went to the poor, and which they ought still to possess. The interest on investments has gone up, the price of labor has gone down, as the phrase goes. Thus it is that the increase of wealth is always accompanied by an increase of poverty, and that the inordinate greed of men and their inordinate accumulations are one large cause of inordinate misery.

III. Political economy thus explains the relations of wealth and poverty, but there it leaves the matter; it does not justify these relations, it brings no comfort to those who suffer by them. On the contrary, it excites at once a bitter sense of wrong and a desire to resist and rectify it, if necessary by violence. The toiler will ask, "Why should I not enjoy all the fruits of my labor? By what right can another appropriate any share of my earnings to himself? Is it not sheer robbery—violent robbery to become supported by the strength of the law—that a man who produces nothing should live in the height of luxury on my labor, while I, the creator of this wealth, get as my share only the bare necessities of life? Why should not I recover my own by violence as soon as I get the chance?"

And indeed if the world's theory about wealth were correct there would be no answer to the discontented worker. If there were no God dispensing temporal things according to His will, and no future life for compensation and reward; if this world were the only one, and wealth the only source of happiness and all good; if there were no revelation of God in religion; then indeed the

unequal distribution of worldly goods would be a most violent injustice, to be rectified by all men or each as best they could. It would be impossible then to ask the poor to accept their lot with contentment and make the best of it. The only answer to their complaints would be, that those who have intend to keep, and that they who object shall be crushed.

There is no basis for social harmony apart from the recognition of the Christian theory about the world and human life. Religion solves the difficulty with one word, "*Deus vult*"—God wills it. He is supreme. He owes nought to any man. He can dispense His gifts as He will; and however He assigns them He can do no injustice. What we create by our industry is really God's creation, and is held by us from His free bounty. From this view the poor man will derive contentment, the rich man security, and both of them harmony in their diversities.

It was the will of God that poverty should be the prevalent condition of men. The majority must toil in the sweat of their brow for their daily bread. To the Israelites Moses said: "There will not be wanting poor in the land of thy habitation; therefore, I command thee to open thy hand to thy needy and poor brother that liveth in the land" (Deut. xv, ii). And to us Christ says, "The poor you have always with you" (Matt. xxvi, 11). The same law is written by God on the face of the world as clearly as in revelation. The multitudes of mankind must of necessity labor hard for their daily bread, and many of them must of necessity fall behind in the struggle, and become dependent on the charity of their brethren. Each man has a natural right to sufficiency for decent life, and God has made that provision for every one, by means partly of His natural and partly of His religious laws. But no man has the right to complain that God is more bountiful to others than to

him. It is no injustice if God calls one to higher functions than another, and assigns a superabundance to one man and bare sufficiency to another. He manifests His perfections in the infinite variety of His works; and in the world of men there must be varieties of spiritual and temporal endowment, and varieties of condition, in order that they may carry out varieties of duty and of virtue.

Men are called to different states through the operation of natural causes. There are endless diversities of character, some personal and some national, of bodily strength and of talent; some of these are inherited, some developed by our own action. Hence rise special aptitudes for command or obedience, for working or organizing work, for inventing, for accumulating. Some can render service, which, though not productive, makes the labors of other men more productive—services of one hour which are worth the produce of twenty hours of manual labor. Some are able to supply workmen with the consumable wealth which they need for each day, in exchange for a larger amount of unconsumable wealth which they have created. Others by concentrating the efforts of many men, or by the use of inventions, can acquire a larger profit than the workers could gain unaided for themselves. Some again can grant facilities to others for using their powers. Men who are better endowed in any way than certain others thus obtain the command and control of their labor; they render certain services which are paid for not by the wealth which they themselves create, but by rights acquired over the wealth which others have created beyond their own actual needs. Men of superior endowments will generally, even without fraud, secure to themselves larger gains than those who are of inferior ability and acquirements. Those whose energies are not applied directly to production, will receive more than those who are directly engaged in producing. The fund which enriches

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those who do not produce cannot be any other than what is created by the producers. It is in the very nature of things that this should be the case. It is then by a natural and, therefore, just law, that some grow rich on the wealth that others have produced.

Thus it is that God calls some out of the multitudes of men to the privileges and responsibilities of wealth, and assigns for their maintenance a large portion of the earnings of other men. In this there is no injustice. Men are not the creators and absolute owners of the wealth which they produce. Their labor is not the cause of it, but only the condition in consideration of which God gives the harvest out of His free benevolence. God is the creator and owner of it. He can assign it to whomsoever He will. No one can claim more than is necessary for life and salvation hereafter; and he who has a sufficiency for these purposes cannot justly complain against God or the order of things that He has appointed. If God give more out of His treasury to certain ones, there is inequality indeed, but He has wronged no man, He has done as He wished with His own.

IV. God being the God of peace and not of disorder, His kingdom being one not divided against itself, we may be sure that, as He has created different classes, the normal relations between these must be of harmony and not of warfare. The natural laws of God in the world, supplemented by the spiritual law of Christ, are sufficient, if duly observed, to secure due harmony between the different states of mankind and turn their inequalities to the joint advantage of both.

God has called certain persons to the state of power and wealth, not through their own deserts or for their own advantage, but in order that they might render special services to Him and to human society. Their position has not been given to them to excite them to arrogance and contempt of others, nor to enable them to live

apart from the rush of the world's work in a serene, lofty, exclusive sphere of their own. Their power is not given to them that they may oppress the poor, or combine to increase their own wealth by robbing the toilers, or exact from them a larger return than their labor produces, or create solitudes for their own pleasures by casting out hundreds and refusing them the right to live and labor and draw their sustenance from their mother earth. Their wealth is not given to them in absolute irresponsible ownership to be hoarded up or squandered as caprice and extravagance may dictate. They are stewards and trustees rather than owners of their wealth. They are accountable to God and man for the proper and unselfish use of the advantages they have received. The civil laws at times restrain a man's ownership in the interest of his family or his fellow citizens; the divine law puts a restraint on ownership, under eternal penalties, in the interests of God and human society.

The rich are bound to be moderate in the enjoyment of their wealth and to restrain the excess of their desires, remembering that as men they, like the poor, have no absolute claim to more than is sufficient for good and decent life. They are not indeed bound to live as do the poor; they may allow themselves many things as suitable to their station, which would be superfluity and luxury to many other men, for "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out thy corn on the floor" (Deut. xxv, 4). But any excessive extravagance is a sinful misappropriation of goods not their own.

Further, a considerable amount of wealth ought to go back to the classes from whom it originally came; and that not in the wages of ordinary circulation—value given for value received—but as a tribute due. Turning to nature we find the rivers bringing down their treasure of limpid water to be lost in the ocean; but the sea returns it all, giving it up first in vapors to the clouds to be deposited on the

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mountains, which again feed the river heads. The earth yearly gives up to us its wealth in food for the myriad armies of man and beast and bird; but the energy which has gone forth from it has to be restored in labor and irrigation and fertilization. So is it with the rich man. He receives from the community many privileges which he has not earned, he receives without an equivalent the fruits of the surplus labor of many of his fellow men; he has received artificial rights to those fruits, created by the laws and continued long after the original justification for them had ceased. He receives special protection in his numerous rights over and above what is accorded to others. These benefits should not all be absolved without return. He has received from the social system certain energies of wealth, position, education; it is contrary to the course of nature that these should be lost in selfishness; they should be conserved, transformed and rendered back in the shape of other energies of service to the community. This service, whether personal or in the form of wealth bestowed, is for the rich man the fulfilment of the law of labor, utility and progress, which binds all men. He owes it as a debt, without further remuneration, because he has already received his remuneration in advance. He owes it, too, as part compensation to the poor for their self-denial in yielding quickly up to him so large a proportion of their labor without an equivalent. This return to the community is not a matter of free benevolence; still less is it a pittance to be flung disdainfully to importunate suppliants, dishonoring at once giver and receiver and the sacred name of charity; but it is demanded by rigid justice. If only this were recognized and carried out, then peace and mutual benefit would result from the diversities in human life, instead of the present warfare and mutual injury.

The world, however, refuses to admit the Christian view about

wealth, and the Christian laws that control its use. Evil consequences have followed in abundance and they have begotten a further progeny of evil which has multiplied till it is beyond human remedy. A state of things has arisen which is not defensible on any principles of religion or political economy, and which is contrary to the intentions of divine Providence and the laws of nature and society. Instead of mankind being divided into two moderate states of wealth and poverty, harmonious and beneficial each to the other, we find on the one hand fortunes of overwhelming magnitude, too great for enjoyment, useless almost to their owners or spent in the wildest extravagance; and on the other hand, instead of mere poverty, depths of horrible destitution and suffering, resulting from the misuse of wealth. By the action of man, overthrowing the designs of Providence, millions have been robbed of their natural rights, and of the share which God intended them to draw from the common stock. Society at large has, by rejecting the principles of Christianity, become guilty of all the wrongs, the crimes, the destruction of temporal and eternal life among the disinherited millions. "He that taketh away the bread gotten by sweat is like him that killeth his neighbor. He that sheddeth blood and he that defraudeth the laborer of his hire are brothers" (Eccles. xxxiv, 26, 27). The blood of thousands cries aloud to God for vengeance on the society that has slain them and God makes answer: "Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in due time, that their foot may slide; the day of destruction is at hand, and the time makes haste to come" (Deut. xxxii, 35).

VI. THE STATE OF POVERTY

"Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life, . . . in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken." — Gen. iii, 17, 19.

I. These words are the institution of the State of Poverty. They are words of wrath and terror; the sentence of lasting punishment on man for his great transgression. As he revolted against God, so the earth, which had been subject to his dominion, revolted against him, no longer producing its wealth spontaneously, but requiring long and painful labor. Toil involves poverty; they are correlative, always associated. Men work because they are hungry, or because they fear to be so. He who must needs work daily for his daily bread, who has no reserve laid by to live upon, who has little leisure, but who can provide himself with the necessaries and decencies of life, he is poor in the sense in which God has appointed poverty with toil to be the lot of mankind.

Ordinary poverty, which is associated with labor, that is what the text speaks of. It is poverty in this moderate sense—a poverty which is really sufficiency—that was laid by God as a curse, and as the punishment of Adam's sin on the human race; and not that state of destitution and degradation, produced by our civilization, and wrongly though usually described by the sacred name of Poverty.

In the opening chapters of the New Testament we find poverty again. When Our Lord opened His mouth to deliver the New Law upon the Mount, His first words were: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Poverty since then

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is no longer a curse, but the first of the beatitudes, provided that it is something deeper than mere external poverty, and is willingly embraced and turned to good purpose.

Here are two very different aspects of poverty, set forth in Scripture itself. There is a mystery in poverty; it is important that we understand it. Poverty is a divine fact; it is one of the most important facts in the social system; it is one of the most serious problems and needs the most careful treatment. Because the divine secret hidden in it has not been understood, it has become a most fertile source of disunion, and a threatening danger in the future. It was well said by David: "Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor" (Ps. xl, 1). This is a special gift of God. He who instituted poverty is the sole source of true information about it. The right understanding of it comes only from religion.

II. The world, the contemner of God, has not merited the blessedness of understanding concerning the poor and the needy. It has been grievously mistaken about the function of poverty in the order of things. It estimates poverty as God estimates sin: as the greatest of evils, the most contemptible of conditions, a thing to be feared, hated, and, if possible, destroyed. Every effort is directed to the avoidance of poverty and the gaining of riches. To be rich is to be happy and esteemed. If a man be rich all is pardoned to him; if he be poor, his offenses meet severe punishment and his virtues will hardly gain him respect. The modern view does not differ very widely from the view of old paganism. There is not so much wanton cruelty inflicted on the lower classes, but as wide a gulf as ever separates them from their superiors. The poor man is no longer bought and sold, but in many places, notably great cities, he suffers more than the misery, the degradation, the

grinding toil of the old slavery. The state of poverty is not recognized for what it really is, one of the constituent parts of the social system. It is not taken account of and assigned its duties and its rights in the body politic, but it is considered rather an excrescence, a deformity, a failure. Still less do men recognize the higher position that religion gives it as an object for our veneration, tenderness and desire. They regard it as an annoying tax on them; they relieve it grudgingly to keep it quiet, and to prevent its squalor becoming too publicly scandalous, and disturbing the enjoyments of the rich. Rich and poor are alike trained to hate and escape from poverty. Nothing could be more incomprehensible to them than the idea of renouncing wealth in order to embrace poverty as a greater good. The gospel of the world is: "Blessed are the rich."

At first sight there may seem to be much reason in the view the world takes. Our first duty, right, destiny, is to live. Life is not mere existence, it is exercising our faculties, using and enjoying the world. Does the poor man live? Does he exercise and enjoy his own life and other life? He is cut off from science and art—two of the great needs of the soul—from knowledge, and from the enjoyment of the beautiful; he does not even understand them enough to desire them. He knows nothing of nature, of the great world with all its wonders and delights. Thousands are cut off from the enjoyment even of God's sunshine and the pure fresh air, and from the restful, soothing sight of country landscape and of open sea. They are imprisoned in narrow, grimy streets, in dark workshops or mines, limited to one round of monotonous, mechanical work. These conditions cramp and lower the whole of life. There is no leisure, no cultivation, no refinement, no intellectual resource; none of the many interests that absorb the mind;

no apprehension of anything brighter or nobler than their sordid surroundings. The lives of the poor are altogether on a lower level than the lives of the rich. There is so much less of life and of humanity in them. They lead rather the lives of vegetables than of free intelligences with capacities that only infinite greatness and infinite goodness can satisfy. Surely, then, poverty is an unmitigated evil, as dire a curse as when sentence was passed in Eden.

Yet it is not so. God is merciful even in His wrath, and His punishments turn to the advantage of the elect. They are evil to a certain extent, as being the consequences of sin, but through God's grace they may become the means of attaining to higher and spiritual good. Thus, suffering expiates our sins, sanctifies our souls, prepares us for heaven. Death, the extreme penalty, the horror of many, has become a repose, the triumph of the spirit over the world, the entrance to the supreme life. In like manner poverty, *i. e.*, privation, labor, weariness, has become the first beatitude in Our Lord's kingdom. They who are poor in spirit, as well as in the body, enjoy a nobler, easier, safer, happier state than that of the rich. In its temporal aspect, too, poverty is most useful and even necessary to the well-being of society; it is the basis and support of communities, the stimulus of strength, wealth and progress. We have already seen that it is most advantageous that there should be a rich class, on account of the duties which they alone can do; we have seen that it is a physical impossibility for all men to be rich. We shall consider now the dignity of the state of poverty, and its importance for the material interests of the world, for the advantage of the poor themselves, and for the glory of God.

III. 1. Our Lord changed and glorified poverty by choosing it

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for Himself. He, all-rich, all-powerful, all-wise, found this the state of life most suitable of all to His dignity, His holiness and His great work. In His birth, in His life, in His death, He was absolutely destitute, "and in labors from His youth" (Ps. lxxxvii, 16). His example may well help men to endure His lot, not only with resignation, but with gladness and even delight.

2. The poor are the special favorites of God. In the Old Testament He shows Himself as their Protector and the Avenger of their wrongs, He appoints them rights and privileges, He commits them most specially to the tenderness and care of His people. Our Lord, entering into the world, manifested Himself first of all to the poor by a special revelation through the angels. The chief mark of His divine mission, as given to the messengers of St. John, more important than curing the sick or raising the dead, was that "the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi, 5). They, no doubt, had their own special sins, hardness and coarseness, but on them our Lord denounces no wo; their condition was their excuse; their temporal indigence was a claim on our Lord's spiritual generosity. Even when the Apostles had the conversion of the world on their hands, they devoted special care to the poor; and ever since a vast proportion of the work of the Church and of her religious orders has consisted in the relief of physical sufferings. How great a comfort to the desolate poor, to feel that they are the object of so much love!

3. Poverty forces the soul upon God. The great danger of a life of pleasure and prosperity is that men learn to "trust in them"; they are wrapped up in them, limit their desires to these things, forget about heaven, and become alienated from God. But he who works and suffers is little likely to think that this life is the whole of his destiny. His aspirations witness to the truths of religion and compel him to look toward the infinite and eternal.

4. It is much more evident to the poor man than to the rich that God supports and will provide for him. He takes no thought of the morrow, and each day brings sufficiency. He has experienced this, and though he knows not how he is to receive his daily bread, he is not solicitous about it. As he is free from anxiety, his poverty is divested of that which to the rich man seems its greatest terror; and, at the same time, he is saved from that want of confidence in God which is the source of most of our troubles of mind. In God he finds security and peace.

5. It is a great advantage to the bulk of mankind to find themselves in an easy school of virtue, and safe from the many dangers and grave responsibilities that fall to the rich. Their powers and their freedom may be limited by the necessities of life, but freedom of spirit from the thraldom of earthly possessions comes naturally to them, and has not to be gained through bitter struggles under heavy penalties for failure. They can more easily acquire the important virtue of contentment; according to the principle that the more men have, the more they want. Poverty teaches men industry, patience, detachment, lowliness, simplicity of character; it keeps the passions down, depriving them of their fuel, and limiting the opportunities of sin; it helps to make satisfaction for sin and reduces the debt of punishment due for it; it is medicinal for the diseases of the soul, and it is meritorious of a high reward.

6. There is an incongruity between enjoying the finite and the infinite, having one's fill of good things here and good things hereafter. Our Lord indicates it in the parable: "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented" (Luke xvi, 25).

7. When the poor are able to take to heart and realize and con-

sole themselves with such reflections as these, their privations and limitations do not amount to so very much. They are without the leisure and repose, the elevation in position and culture, the mastery over their movements, the enjoyment of nature and art, which belong to the rich man. But what loss are all these things when men can rise to the possession and enjoyment of the infinite? Compared with the treasures men can possess in God all else is but a speck of dust. The poorest can have that repose which attends a good conscience and a pure life. He is more free from troubles than any monarch can ever hope to be. By resignation, the will of God becomes his will, and he has all that he desires. By intercourse with God in prayer and the practise of virtue, he can rise to an elevation of character such as no worldly education can give. Religion gives the highest culture, and in giving us God, it gives us perfect happiness. The possession of the most real advantages of life is then quite consistent with the state of poverty, and if any man is miserable and degraded in that state, it is entirely due to himself.

IV. 1. Not only in the kingdom of God, but also in the body politic, the poor occupy a very important and honorable position. They are very numerous; they form the great bulk of the community; they are the broad foundation on which the pyramid of civil society is reared. In legislation, for the greatest happiness of the greatest number, it is they who have principally to be consulted. If false principles should prevail, rendering their position unsatisfactory and rousing discontent in them, the whole social body is sick and disorganized. Their condition, material and mental, is perhaps the soundest test of the system under which they live.

2. The poor are important in the community as being the ultimate source of all wealth. Intelligence and capital are necessary

to direct their efforts most profitably, but it is their muscles and sinews that draw forth the earth's raw wealth and give it proper form and its full value. The poor man, out of the unpaid portion of his labor, supports all the unproductive classes, some highly necessary to the community as doing useful work in return for their sustenance, although many others are absolutely idle, useless, consumers. The community and each of these classes owes a debt of gratitude to the laborer for his benefits, and for the patience and contentment with which he renders them.

3. Poverty, that is, the pressure of want and hunger, and the need of labor to avoid them, is of absolute necessity for the development of the world and progress of the human race. It is the duty of man to "fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over . . . all living creatures that move upon the earth" (Gen. i, 28); also "to seek and search out wisely all things that are done under the sun" (Eccles. i, 13); to discover the secrets of nature, to wrest its treasures from the earth and mold them into new forms, to create science and manufactures. "This painful occupation which God hath given to the children of men to be exercised therein" (*Ibid.*), would never be accomplished if all men either had the means of leading an indolent life like the dwellers in tropical lands, or the leisure to devote to killing and ravaging, like the richer classes of earlier times.

4. The history of the rise and fall and struggles of nations shows us that invariably wealth saps the energies and corrupts the life of a nation. It leads to luxury, to immorality, and, at last, to destruction. Poverty, on the other hand, implies frugality, industry, self-denial, simplicity and strength; and on these virtues national greatness and success always follow. At least, with prosperity come wealth and luxury; but these, so far from being, as men think,

the crown and reward of national virtue, are the commencement of enervation and decline. Thus the simple mountaineers of Greece repulsed the gorgeous hosts of Persia at Marathon and Salamis; they, too, grown corrupt, were crushed by the austere power of Rome; the Roman Empire in time was shattered by the rude barbarians of the North. The same law rules even the Church of God. "Never has she been in such peril as when she was rich." Never does she manifest such perfect virtue, such divine strength, such expansiveness, as when she is overwhelmed by poverty and persecution. Poverty is just as necessary for maintaining the condition of the world in general.

5. The existence of poverty is a further benefit to the rich, as providing them with the means of saving their souls. They may sanctify their wealth by sharing it with the poor; and they may enjoy with less danger the privileges of their position when they have sacrificed their luxuries to provide the poor with necessaries. The poor, with their many wants, afford an opportunity to the rich of practising the most brilliant virtues that can adorn men. Tenderness, sympathy, generosity, the remembrance of their brotherhood with the lowly, the recognition of human equality and human rights, sacrifice of time and labor, substance and self, ingenuity in devising various remedies for various needs—these virtues, to be learned only by contact with the poor and suffering, not only chasten the individual character, but raise the whole standard of general life, besides covering a multitude of sins, and opening the way to heaven.

6. Toil and poverty, in some sense, are necessary for every person who would be saved. The law is for all. Even those who are exempt from the need of toiling for their support are bound to be producers—producers of some benefit to the community. Even

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those who are called to serve God in the state of wealth are bound to be poor in spirit, *affectu* if not *effectu*. "They that rejoice as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy as if they possessed not; and they that use this world as if they used it not" (I Cor. vii, 30–31).

V. Thus the Christian view of poverty is, that it is a state of economical and spiritual benefit to men. The world rejects this view; it does not care about the spiritual aspect, and considers that economical poverty is an evil. This false view has produced endless practical evils; all speculations about poverty have, in consequence, been vain, all schemes frustrated, all remedies useless. Men hope to destroy poverty; they might as well attempt to dry up the ocean. They endeavor to alleviate its ills, but they can only touch its outskirts; and, after all is done, poverty remains deeper and more hopeless than ever—a greater problem and a greater danger. The Christian view brings about a very different result.

1. It causes respect for the poor, recognizing their state as a respectable one and not degraded; not exceptional but the normal state of the majority of men; as honorable as the state of wealth, though differing superficially from it. It causes love for the poor, regarding them as images of Jesus Christ, who takes to Himself the treatment we accord to His suffering members. So it leads many daily to resign their place in the world to become servants of the poor. Many of the noblest have left the ranks of the idle to become workers; they have enriched the world even materially by contributing their labors, and by abstaining from wasteful consumption.

2. Hence men have been shown the dignity of labor and the happiness that may be found in poverty. The rich are taught to respect poverty, the poor to be contented; two most necessary things, especially at the present day. A doctrine which contents the multi-

tude is better for social progress than a doctrine that makes all men struggle feverishly for an object that only few can attain.

3. The Christian view is grounded, and helps to maintain the doctrine of the national equality of all mankind. Outside of religion men may declaim about equality, but they will never establish it. Theoretical and legal equality will never make men socially and practically equal, as long as wealth is held in supreme honor and poverty in contempt. The Catholic Church alone has the power to give the poor man his due place in human society, civil and religious; she makes him respected and contented, and gives him compensation for the hardness of his lot; this she does because to her alone has God given the blessedness of understanding concerning the needy and the poor.

VII. SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." — Luke xii, 31.

I. There is a word in every man's mouth—a word that is full of bright visions and high hopes to multitudes weary with labor and wasted with hunger—a word that brings fear to the hearts of the prosperous and anxiety to those who bear the responsibilities of ruling, whether it be in Monarchy or Republic. It is Socialism. This is a world-wide problem of this day; it has to be taken account of in the internal politics of every country of the world. Statesmen, soldiers, philosophers, the rich and the poor have all a stake in the settlement of this question. Any one of us may be vitally concerned with it some time or other. Socialism is not simply a social or political question; it is closely connected with religious doctrines. Let us consider it by that light which enlightens all questions, so that we may be able to form a true judgment about a thing which is unduly hated by many, which raises undue hopes in more, and is misunderstood by almost all.

The political tendency in Christian countries is toward a widening of the basis of power; toward a transfer of power, and of honor, from the hands of one to many, from a few to all. At one time power had become concentrated in the hands of one—King, Emperor, Dictator. To him the people belonged by a sort of right of ownership. He was unquestioned lord of their lives, their possessions, and even of their religious convictions sometimes. Subjects had no rights before him. Their duty was to render up all their earnings to him in taxes, their daughters to his lusts, and their lives

in fighting for his personal ambition or private enmities. Two hundred years ago a king could say: "The State? I am the State." Fifty years ago another could say to an Ambassador: "Sir, there is no man of consequence in my dominions except the man I choose to speak to, and only for the time that I am speaking with him." Now we are approaching a time when the poor man, the worker, will be the depository of power. It is he who is coming now to be recognized as "the State." The only man of consideration is the man who possesses his confidence. The poor man is of importance because he is one of the great dangers of the State as at present constituted; and he is of importance and of danger because of Socialism. He is, or he soon will be, a Socialist; and Socialism means in general terms a great revolution in the established order of society, and the loss and gain of much that is valuable. Social revolution is not of necessity violent, unjust, or evil. It is the continuance of the secular movement of mankind which has been in progress since Christianity took root in Europe. Similar revolutions have already taken place, not always with those horrors which are usually associated with the name of Revolution, but peaceably, gradually, legally, under the auspices of religion. Another social revolution is in progress; its completion is only a matter of a few decades. Whether it shall be worked out with violence and end in catastrophe, or whether it shall be carried out peaceably and result in sharing the goods of this world according to each man's rights, and so unite all classes in the bonds of brotherhood, this will depend entirely on the amount of recognition accorded by the contending parties to the doctrine and law of Jesus Christ.

The word "Socialism" may indicate very various things. There is the Socialism which is immoral and unchristian, which declares that "Property is robbery," and which would rectify inequalities by

seizing on all wealth and dividing it among all men. There is a doctrinaire Socialism, which has its plans carefully elaborated on paper without taking account of human nature. It disregards the law that a social system must be developed from the living organism of society and can not be manufactured brand-new for the occasion out of the brain of an amateur. Then there is the Socialism of responsible statesmen who yield bit by bit to the requirements of the multitudes. This is founded, not on any deep, true principles, but on present material interests; it proceeds sometimes on right and sometimes on wrong lines, and at the best only does imperfectly what Christianity would have done in the natural course had it not been impeded. Finally there is a Christian Socialism grounded on the equality of all men as declared by God, on brotherly love, and on the right of every man to receive a proper subsistence in return for honest labor.

There is a common idea at the base of all these forms. In a general way we may say that Socialism is the assertion of the dignity of humanity, the brotherhood and equality of all men, and the rights of labor. It would abolish these artificial classifications which have survived from a primitive form of society. It demands a share in those fruits of the earth which have been appropriated by the few who are strong, and used by them for selfish and anti-social ends. It would make every man useful in some way to society, and would say: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat" (II Thess. iii, 10). It requires that they who produce the bulk of wealth should not be arbitrarily restricted from getting some benefit from it; and that as a man has a right to his life he should also have the right to live with such comfort and decency as befits his state; and that on due conditions a man should have a share in the gifts of God to men, in the earth as well as in the fresh air and the sunshine. The

watchwords of Socialism are liberty, equality and fraternity; three privileges brought by Jesus Christ to men, but suppressed by the strong for their own aggrandizement. These I take to be the fundamental ideas in all that is called Socialism; these I shall mean, in their Christian aspect, when I speak of Socialism.

These ideas have been germinating in the minds of men for a century and a half at least; and now they are bearing fruit, partly good and partly bad. A general movement is in progress for ameliorating the condition of the weaker classes, and releasing them from the tyranny of capital and from virtual slavery. The Catholic Church through the Sovereign Pontiff, and bishops, and laymen, is the guiding spirit of this movement. On the other hand, schemes have been devised for overthrowing the social system, or patching it up without the aid of Christianity; absurd ideals have been set up, destructive errors have been made, brutal threats have been uttered, and these have discredited the legitimate aspirations of social reformers. But it is only the methods that are at fault. We ought to disregard the superficial and accidental extravagances and seek for the true idea which must necessarily exist in any universal movement of the human mind.

II. Some persons no doubt will ask what religion can have to do with a matter which is entirely political and social,—a matter of mere external organization and distribution of material wealth. Why should the Church interfere with this more than with excise regulations or town drainage?

1. It is true this is not the direct work of Christianity. Its first object is to reveal divine truth to us, and cleanse us from sin, and guide us to heaven. When a certain one said to Our Lord: "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me," He made answer: "Man, who hath appointed me judge or divider over you?" (Luke xii, 14). But none

the less did the teaching of Our Lord influence social and commercial arrangements. He laid down certain great truths and laws, and we have to guide the whole of our lives by these. There is no revelation about forms of government, or colonization, or trading; the laws of hygiene, and of supply and demand do not belong to the moral or the spiritual order; yet even here we have to be guided by the religious laws of justice and benevolence, and by the remembrance that the ultimate end of all human action is the glory of God and the salvation of souls. We require the blessing of God on our temporal as well as on our spiritual affairs, on public as well as on private life, in order to insure a happy result; and, if we would gain this blessing, it is necessary that we conform ourselves to the law revealed to us in religion. A social revolution has been in progress during the whole of the Christian era. Under the influence of religion each step was accomplished gradually and peaceably, without disturbing established order. So took place the abolition of slavery first, and then of serfage; the formation of Christendom out of untutored hordes of barbarians, the establishment of popular liberties. The changes that are now threatening are not more extreme than those which are past, and they ought to be equally beneficial to society in general. But unchristian methods of advocacy, and unchristian methods of opposition, have between them created dangers which do not belong to these changes themselves.

2. Besides this general connection of Christianity with social affairs, there is also a special connection with Socialism. The principles expressed by Socialists had their first origin in Christianity. The object aimed at is not very different from that which is proposed in the Gospel in general terms. Such errors as there may be in contemporary Socialism are mostly in the details by which men seek to reduce the principles to practise. Christianity does not sup-

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ply the working details, but it originated the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity; it has given us the truth which makes us free (John vii, 32); it has brought us into "the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. viii, 21), it acknowledges no distinction of nationality and respect for persons, it declares fraternal charity to be the "bond of perfection" and the "fulfilling of the law" (Col. iii, 14; Rom. xiii, 10).

The immediate effect of these principles was the birth of a voluntary Socialism in the early Church. "All they that believed were together, and had all things in common. Their possessions and goods they sold, and divided them all, according as every one had need" (Acts ii, 44–45). This was carried on and developed by the hermits in their deserts, and later in the monasteries and convents. In these there was perfect equality. All worldly inequalities were obliterated; there was no distinction but that of the necessary offices, conferred by election on account of special capacity. Any one might rise to the highest position. All worked for the community, and the community awarded to each what was sufficient, and supported its members in age and illness. All property was in common. They were submissive, as social order demands; but this was a supreme exercise of Christian liberty, subduing self and will to the law of perfection in Jesus Christ, and giving them mastery over those passions which are the tyrants of men.

This is the highest ideal of Christian life. The Church has never put it forward as necessary, or even as useful for all mankind; it would be inconsistent with certain of the duties that must be performed by the majority of men, and it involves a sacrifice of natural rights which can not be commanded but must be spontaneous. But there is nothing to be said against those who would take certain features of the ideal Christian society, train men to see their ad-

vantages, and adapt them by legal means to the conditions of every-day life. In such a work the Catholic Church must be the principal authority and guide. She has real experience of Socialism in its religious form; she has evolved a system which has succeeded perfectly; and she can judge dispassionately of the limitations which must be placed upon it in order to guard natural rights. Irresponsible amateurs, however full of the enthusiasm of humanity, however indignant at human wrongs, can never have practical wisdom to devise, or power to establish a new social system, without the aid of that Church which alone founded, and still chiefly inspires, western civilization.

3. There is still more in the spirit and the legislation of the Church that favors the Socialist's ideals of the equality and brotherhood of all men, and restrains excessive accumulation by the powerful to the disadvantage of the weaker classes. (1) The Church admits no distinction of person before the altar of God. It would be abhorrent to her to fence off a part of a church like a cage, for human beings, to separate inferiors from their betters, and degrade them even at prayer. (2) The Church taught the wealthy that they held their property in trust for God and the poor. St. Philip Neri said, "The rich man is the natural prey of the poor." (3) She encouraged these grand works of munificence, so seldom imitated now, by which enormous amounts of property were given over for the benefit of the poor or the general community. (4) The wasteful consumption of wealth for selfish uses was at times restrained by sumptuary laws. It is an antiquated contrivance, but it suited the times and served a very useful purpose. (5) The stringent laws against interest on money lent, unsuitable to an age of vast and intricate commercial dealings, were necessary to protect the small landowner from being enslaved and devoured by swindling usurers.

(6) There were laws, too, against forestalling; against those great monopolies of some article which are found so effectual at the present day for the heaping up of sudden and enormous fortunes, and which will dislocate trade, destroy confidence, ruin many, and reduce the small earnings of the poor. (7) Further, the Church secured fair treatment for the working classes by organizing labor in religious guilds and by pointing out the grievous sin of oppressing the poor, defrauding laborers of their wages, and taking advantage of the extreme necessity of others to one's own profit. (8) Finally there was the continual impulse to self-sacrifice in the service of the needy, which induced multitudes to devote their whole lives to it; and the insistence on the necessity of almsgiving transferred to the poor a large share in these goods and fortune which they could not earn for themselves.

III. It is obvious that if these provisions of the Church's law were carried out constantly and on a large scale, they would so far ameliorate the condition of the poor as to leave them little cause for complaining against the unequal division of temporal goods. It was this kind of teaching, slowly filtering down through all the strata of society, that worked the great social revolutions of the earlier ages; and it would have gone on with its work of social development if it had not been checked in later centuries by the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the anti-Christian elements in the modern Revolution. But the Christian Church has had to fight for bare existence; she has been almost overwhelmed by persecution and heresy, infidelity and corruption; her field of labor has been ramaged, her work interrupted and carried on piecemeal and almost by stealth in different countries.

It was the weak and the poor who suffered principally by these catastrophies; for the Church was always their friend and protector,

and it was they who profited chiefly by the restraints on selfishness, extravagance and greed for wealth. Their condition has been and is actually growing worse and worse with frightful rapidity. They have lost the share in social advantages which Christianity assured to them, and at the same time they have lost those spiritual advantages of belief and prayer which are the only real comfort in temporal misfortunes. Their lot has fallen far below what is endurable, and hence the fierce hatred and threatened revolt against the system of society which has crushed them. Ignorant alike of Christian and economical laws and their restraints, conscious of bitter wrongs, taught that utility, *i. e.* gross selfishness, is the law of progress, and that life is a struggle to maintain oneself by crushing others, the multitudes, having long suffered under these principles, are now using them for their own advantage. Socialism in various perverted forms is the means proposed to them; and they welcome any form of it, however impracticable or unchristian, if only it promises to restore to them their rightful inheritance.

Socialism in some form is not of itself necessarily unchristian or anti-social, but only in some of those vagaries which beset every great movement, and which fall aside as fuller light is cast on the subject. But it is an uprising of the popular conscience against those false maxims of the world which have obscured certain great religious truths. It is an incoherent demand for certain Christian rights which have been set aside by pride of race, and of class, and by the inordinate desire of riches. Unfortunately, in many instances, it is an attempt to realize the results of Christianity without the spirit of Christianity. It sometimes seeks to establish by organization and minute rules those relations between men which can only proceed from a heart transformed by faith, and generosity and justice, into the likeness of Jesus Christ. It is a stirring in the right

direction, but unfortunately by the wrong methods. We should show pity to the disinherited for what they have lost, sympathy with their efforts to recover it, and give practical aid in pointing out their errors and helping them to better methods.

The Church of Christ has a double function. It is a great religious force and is a great social force. It regulates our relations to God, and through them our relations with our earthly surroundings. The spiritual message has been rejected by large bodies as being opposed to immediate material interests and the pleasures of the passions. But the message of social regeneration has retained its hold on all men, and they are constantly endeavoring, though blindly, to realize it. It is their misfortune to be ignorant that social order is the branch, and that religion is the trunk, of the tree from which it springs, and that Our Lord Jesus Christ is the root. Hence it is that so many well-meant experts fail to establish harmony of classes, agreement of different races, proper distribution of wealth, secure governments of liberty without license, authority without tyranny. The same error would nullify any schemes of social reform, and perhaps make them more noxious to society than the evils they are expected to cure. The rapid extension of the Catholic Church and the renewal of her vigor, together with the prominent action of the Sovereign Pontiffs in social matters, give us reason to hope that the evolution of the former social system will be in accordance with the divine law and the spirit of Jesus Christ. This alone will insure its success. For it is true not only of the spiritual edifice, but also of the social edifice, that Our Lord Jesus Christ " is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved " (Acts. iv, 11, 12).

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